

American Studies, PhD

The Doctor of Philosophy program in American studies is not currently accepting new applicants.

Learning Outcomes

Students must demonstrate:

- comprehension of the history, values, and methods of interdisciplinary scholarship in the discipline of American studies, and for sport studies subprogram students, this involves a knowledge of the current and foundational theory and methods in critical sport studies, as well as of the contributions to sport studies to American studies and vice-versa;
- knowledge of the multiple forums that exist for the communication, implementation, and praxis of American studies scholarship in social and institutional contexts, especially where diversity, equity, and inclusion are guiding values;
- ability to articulate one's own values, intellectual commitments, and professional goals within and in relationship to the field;
- proficiency in advanced research and scholarly writing skills in the field;
- hands-on participation in university certificate programs, community-based projects and internships, or digital humanities projects, training in college teaching pedagogy where consistent with the student's individual development plan;
- proficiency at situating and interpreting American social and cultural materials historically, while grasping the diversity and distinctness of historical factors as economic, colonial, racializing, transnational, global, and/or linguistic;
- proficiency and experience in communicating American studies scholarship publicly in at least three professional contexts including conference presentations and/or conference organizing; exhibitions/installations; editorial or curatorial work; invited talks; public engagement or public humanities project; publications; or digital humanities project;
- proficiency in the conceptualization, communication, and organizational skills that are crucial to pedagogy at multiple levels of a university or college curriculum, and the creation of a teaching portfolio;
- knowledge of major movements and debates in critical theory and cultural studies, as well as the theoretical and methodological issues and debates in sport history (for sport studies subprogram students); and
- understanding of how historical method, critical theory, and cultural studies concepts are utilized in critical sport studies scholarship, and identifying sports studies' place within and contributions to the wider study of culture and power (for sport studies subprogram students).

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in American studies requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must maintain a program grade-point average of at least 3.00. They may focus on American studies or choose the sport studies subprogram.

Students work with their faculty advisor to map out a coherent plan of study that reflects their particular interests. Students are permitted flexibility in constructing their study plan, but they must meet certain basic requirements, which include a foundation course, area foundation courses, two interdisciplinary fields of concentration, a research skills course, elective coursework, and a dissertation.

The two fields of concentration may be defined to correspond with a student's strongest intellectual interests, but they must be interdisciplinary in concept and multidisciplinary in scope. Each must include coursework from more than one of the university's departments and programs. The two concentration areas may, and usually should, have an intellectual relationship with each other.

Students are expected to recognize that ethnic studies is American studies and American studies is ethnic studies through their coursework and reading.

The PhD in American studies requires the following work. Some course requirements are different for American studies and sports studies.

Coursework

Required Foundation Course

All students complete the required foundation course and should take it as early as possible.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:5000	Frameworks for Interdisciplinary Research in Ethnic and American Studies	3

Area Foundation Courses

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
	Two American studies graduate seminars	6
Sport Studies Students		
SPST:5002	Critical Theories and Cultural Studies	3

First Field of Concentration

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
	Courses in an interdisciplinary field with a historical concentration designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee	18
Sport Studies Students		
	Courses on sport in cultural and historical contexts selected with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee	18

Second Field of Concentration

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
	Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee	18
Sport Studies Students		

Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee; may be a second field in sport studies or a field outside sport studies. 18

Research Skills

All students take the following course.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop (taken two or three times for 1 s.h. each)	2-3

Additional Requirements

All students take the following courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these (to meet semester hours requirement to graduate):		
AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	arr.
Electives		

Admission to PhD Candidacy

Admission to PhD candidacy signifies that the department judges a doctoral student qualified to take the comprehensive examination. Doctoral students advance to PhD candidacy based on a review conducted during their second year in the PhD program (typically during fall semester); the review assesses a student's readiness to complete studies through the comprehensive examination and the dissertation, which is an original work of scholarship. In addition to judging a student's readiness for PhD candidacy, the review provides a progress report on the student's work and a tentative prognosis for future prospects in the field.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination comprises three written exams and one oral exam.

The first exam is taken under the supervision of an American studies faculty member, who also chairs the comprehensive examination. The candidate takes a timed, take-home written exam of no less than four hours and no longer than two days. The exam details the candidate's approach to American studies (methods and models), including the student's position and critical engagement with models of comparative ethnic and American studies scholarship.

The remaining two written exams explore the candidate's major fields; these are at least four hours long and may be given on a take-home basis at the examiner's discretion.

The oral exam covers material from the written exams.

Dissertation

The final requirement for the PhD is the dissertation. A dissertation in American studies is a substantive work of scholarship that involves interdisciplinary research and analysis, and represents an original contribution to knowledge. In most cases, the dissertation takes the form of a book-length manuscript. However, students may propose alternatives to the traditional form, provided they have the dissertation committee's approval and complete a memorandum of understanding with the director of graduate studies in American studies. All dissertations must be approved by a committee of four faculty members, including at least two from the Department of American Studies.

Internships

Qualified graduate students in ethnic and American studies can arrange internships with a number of local agencies, including the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Division of Historic Preservation, the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, the Iowa Humanities Board, Bruce Moore, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, the Englert Theatre, and the Putnam Museum and Science Center. With special permission, candidates conducting research during on-the-job training may receive academic credit through AMST:7994 Independent Study. Other internships with social agencies, government, or businesses may also be arranged.

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Career Advancement

American studies students' career goals are as varied as the topics they study. Graduates are well prepared for careers in a wide range of areas, such as business, education, arts and museum administration, government, journalism, or social services.

The program also provides a good foundation for further graduate studies in the humanities, the social sciences, theology, and business as well as for professional studies in law or medicine.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

American Studies, PhD

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
72 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. ^a		
Students work with their faculty advisor to map out a plan of study that reflects their particular interests; needs to include foundation courses, area foundation courses, two interdisciplinary fields of concentration, a research skills course, elective coursework, and a dissertation. ^b		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
AMST:5000	Frameworks for Interdisciplinary Research in Ethnic and American Studies	3
American studies seminar course ^c		3
Field of concentration course ^d		3
Hours		9
Spring		
American studies seminar course ^c		3
Field of concentration course ^d		3
Field of concentration course ^e		3
Hours		9
Second Year		
Fall		
Field of concentration course ^d		3
Field of concentration course ^e		3
Field of concentration course ^e		3
Hours		9
Spring		
Field of concentration course ^d		3
Field of concentration course ^d		3
Field of concentration course ^e		3
Hours		9
Third Year		
Fall		
Exam: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam ^f		
Field of concentration course ^d		3
Field of concentration course ^e		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		9

Spring

AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop ^h	1
Field of concentration course ^e		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		7

Fourth Year

Fall

Prospectus Defense		
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop ^h	1
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		7

Spring

AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop ^h	1
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		7

Fifth Year

Fall

AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	3
Hours		3

Spring

AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	3
Exam: Doctoral Final Exam ⁱ		
Hours		3
Total Hours		72

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

b The two fields of concentration may be defined to correspond with a student's strongest intellectual interests, but they must be interdisciplinary in concept and multidisciplinary in scope. Each must include coursework from more than one department and program. The two concentration areas may, and usually should, have an intellectual relationship with each other.

c Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate seminars.

d Complete at least 18 s.h. in a first field of concentration. Work with faculty advisor and department's Plan of Study Committee to determine appropriate graduate coursework in an interdisciplinary field with a historical concentration.

e Complete at least 18 s.h. in a second field of concentration. Work with faculty advisor and department's Plan of Study Committee to determine appropriate graduate coursework in an interdisciplinary field.

f Consists of three written exams and one oral exam.

g Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate elective coursework; may include AMST:7090.

h Take two or three times for 1 s.h. each (2-3 s.h. total).

i Dissertation defense.